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ABSTRACT

Reviewing several different conceptions of social studies education, this presidential address assesses the success of the field in providing appropriate education for future citizens. The place of social studies in the curriculum relative to the role of schools in our society is considered and the many and varied purposes for history as expressed by prominent historians are identified. Issues surrounding social studies content, instruction, and textbooks are addressed including directions in which the field is moving and the criteria to be considered when planning and organizing social studies curricula. The social studies have remained a federation of separate subjects. Recent advocacy to abandon the concept of social studies is but a current manifestation of this issue that has remained unsettled since social studies became a curriculum entity. It need not remain that way because out of the current ferment can come the realization that social studies, as an organizer of insights, propositions, content and methodologies from history, the social sciences, and other scholarly fields, is not only useful, but necessary for the school to fill its role in the civic education of youth. Synthesis and understanding of the principles of social studies are essential. Educators must establish the parameters and create the basis for a new social studies that preserves the best of past and current practices, but also addresses emerging realities and 21st century prospects and needs for the social education of citizens in our dynamic and globally-linked society. A 92-item bibliography is included. (GEA)

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Presidential Address

History, Social Sciences, and The Social Studies

National Council for the Social Studies

Annual Meeting

November 20, 1988

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History, Social Sciences, and The Social Studies

The social studies neither as a term nor as a field of academic study is easily definable. Adopted early in this century to identify a set of courses including history, government and civics, economics and sociology, the term was probably used for convenience, but more importantly because it reflected the intellectual climate of the time (Hertzberg, 1981; Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977; Shermis, 1987). As the term gained currency, it became more inclusive, encompassing all of the social sciences. A half century ago Edgar Wesley identified this conception as "the social sciences simplified for pedogogical purposes" (1937).

A second conception is that of social studies as a unitary field that draws its content from various disciplines including, but not limited to history and the social sciences, to address the needs of students and society organized around topics, themes, problems or issues. This fusion approach ignores disciplinary boundaries and typically emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving over the acquisition of information.

A third conception is that of social studies as social science in which the basic constructs and methodologies of the respective disciplines are paramount. In this conception, the curriculum becomes a multi-disciplinary rather than interdisciplinary experience for students, especially at the secondary level.

Another use of the term is even more ambiguous. Sometimes the social studies label is used to encompass a variety of subjects which do not seem to fit elsewhere in the curriculum, but are deemed to have a socializing or utilitarian function (Hertzberg, 1981). Careers, personal finance, marriage and family are examples of courses that have been labeled social studies.

Conceptions of the social studies usually begin with the general premise that the purpose of the social studies in the school curriculum is citizenship education. Although

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proponents may be recognized that other facets of student experience within the formal and informal curriculum and beyond the school will shape and influence this socialization outcome, they either state directly or assume that social studies or the separate subjects that comprise the field are relevant and valuable to citizenship education. If the school's role in this socializing process is conceived primarily as providing significant information about the past and present society and in developing and reinforcing commonly agreed upon values and patterns of behavior, then a didactic mode of instruction prevails. By all accounts, this has been historically and remains the prevalent practice in our schools.

To those who see the essential task of schools and the social studies as developing individuals who can function as "citizen problem-solvers," in the words of two former Council presidents, Shirley Engle and Anna Ochoa (1988, p. 27), then this conception of social studies is unacceptable. Instead, the mode shifts to the hypothetical, to critical analysis and to reflective inquiry as students engage in the direct indepth study of persistent social problems. Questions include not only What?, Who?, Where?, When?, but What if...? How do we know?, So what? What can be done about it? as students deal with real life situations that require them to make informed, rational decisions on the basis of democratic ideals and values. Accounts of classroom practice indicate that this approach to social studies education is rarely found in our schools (Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1979; Goodlad, 1983; McNeil, 1986; McNeil, Part 2, 1988).

As Hazel Hertzberg (1981, p. 172) noted in her review of a century of social studies reform efforts, the delineations of the appropriate education of citizens has been one of our field's most vexing questions. The competing positions were established early in the differing perspectives of the social efficiency reformers who envisioned a society in which people were socialized into their particular niches, and progressives who,

drawing from John Dewey, conceived of a more open, changing society where education could enable individuals to find their own places. In grappling with these contrasting conceptions, social studies educators have continually struggled with a set of related issues. One issue is whether there is to be a fixed body of knowledge to be imparted, or whether personal and social problems are to be the focus of social education. Following from this is the matter of how the curriculum is to be organized - its scope and sequence. Another issue is the nature and appropriateness of instructional methods and materials to fit both children's patterns of growth and development as well as community expectations.

Social Studies in School and Out

The place of social studies in the curriculum must also be considered in the larger context of the purpose and role of schools in our society. Conceptions about education and the role of schools usually address in some way three fundamental considerations: the needs and expectations of the larger society, the needs, interests and developments of students, and the content or subject matter and its manner of presentation.

Some proponents may be concerned with the school's socializing function and helping the student to fit into society, for example, to fulfill an economic role. Others may be concerned with improving the society, in having students become knowledgeable about, and able and willing to address fundamental social, political, economic technological and other issues. Some may be concerned with developing individuals to their fullest potential. Still others may be concerned primarily with advancing the frontiers of knowledge and with the transmission of the knowledge for its own sake (Eisner & Valance, 1974).

In *What Schools Are For* (1979), John Goodlad identified twelve sets of

educational goals typically assigned to schools clustering around four major areas of responsibility - academic, vocational, socio-civic and personal development. The twelve goal clusters he identified are: (1) mastery of basic skills or fundamental processes, (2) career education-vocational education, (3) intellectual development, (4) enculturation, (5) interpersonal relations, (6) autonomy, (7) citizenship, (8) creativity and aesthetic perception, (9) self concept, (10) emotional and physical well being, (11) moral and ethical behavior, and (12) self-realization. Of these twelve, the social studies address enculturation and citizenship directly and all but perhaps two or three of the others at least partly.

Much has been made of the frequent lack of connection, at least as perceived by students, between what they learn and how they learn it in school and life outside of school. In her 1987 presidential address to the American Education Research Association, Lauren Resnick explored four broad contrasts between learning in and out of school:

> "...schooling focuses on the individual's performance, whereas out-of-school mental work is often socially shared. Schooling aims to foster unaided thought, whereas mental work outside school usually involves cognitive tools. School cultivates symbolic thinking whereas mental activity outside school engages directly with objects and situations. Finally, schooling aims to teach general skills and knowledge, whereas situation-specific competencies dominate outside" (Resnick, 1987, p. 16).

Resnick called for redirecting the focus of schooling to include more of the features of successful out-of-school functioning while at the same time reasserting the traditional civic and cultural functions of schools. Schools, she contended, should provide appropriate sites for students to engage in reflection and evaluation of the

everyday world and become "communities of reasoned discourse on public issues." Her views, just as those of progressive educators in the early part of this century, reflect the social and cultural milieu of the era. What is striking to those of us in social studies is the strong emphasis on education for citizenship as the ultimate purpose of schooling that Resnick and other like-minded observers claim.

The Matter of Purpose

"Why do we have to study this stuff?" is a question I sure most of us have heard from our students. I know it was one I heard from those not-so-eager students in U.S. and world history classes in my very first year of teaching. The question goes to the very heart of the current and continuing debate about the purpose, role and nature of social studies in the school curriculum. History teachers might respond as did one of my colleagues when he urged: "know history to defend yourself" (Hepburn, 1982). He went on to elaborate:

> "History is used, or abused every day by persons with whom students come into contact. History is used to influence students' perceptions, attitudes, choices and behavior. It is used to sell products and sell ideas. How? History carries the weight of authority. And, the consumer who knows nothing of the past can do little but accept historical 'reasons' as authoritative. He is an easy mark." (1)

Historians see many and varied purposes for history. For Arnold Toynbee, history provided personal pleasure and a window on the world (Toynbee, 1969). For Oscar Handlin, history is a path to self-understanding, a means to seek truth, to teach the meaning of language through understanding others' use of the spoken and written word, and to provide context by helping locate discrete phenomena in the universe of

things (Handlin, 1979, pp. 403-413). Henry Steele Commager (1980) echoed and elaborated on these views. He prefaced his discussion on the uses of history with the warning that history teaches what historians or those in power want taught, that it can be distorted or even prostituted as Hitler and others have done. But, he goes on to cite its more benevolent uses. History can:

- provide mankind with memory
- fire the imagination
- broaden intellectual horizons
- deepen sympathies
- summon up a great cloud of witnesses from the past to instruct and edify each new generation
- encourage each generation to believe it can build upon the past and perhaps progress into the future
- inculcate moral precepts (p. 78)

And what are these precepts? Commager lists perspective, humility, patience, tolerance, belief in the necessity of freedom and the idea that individuality counts. History Advocate Diane Ravitch contends that:

> "Properly taught, history encourages the development of intelligence, civility and a sense of perspective. It endows students with a broad knowledge of other times, other cultures, other places; it presents cultural resources on which students may draw for the rest of their lives. These are the values and virtues gained through the study of history. Beyond these history needs no further justification." (Ravitch, 1988, p. 52)

In *American Memory* (1987), Lynne Cheney claims that today's students have "no cultural memory" and that history is a kind of social cement that holds our society

together. History enables us to realize our human potential, to reaffirm our humanity and to pass on the wisdom of the ages.

For veteran high school teacher Robert Duffy, history offers certain "cogencies." It offers perspective or the ability to see people, ideals and events as part of a larger ongoing story; it provides encounters with personalities, values and ideas different from one's own that require reflection; it brings an appreciation of relativeness in a pluralistic world; and it helps to develop analytical and skeptical habits of mind (Duffy, 1988).

And what are the purposes for the social sciences in our schools? Accepting as a given the primary purpose of education for citizenship, geographers are likely to focus on the necessity of geographic literacy as fundamental to the one's general education, in the same way that history is (Winston, 1986; Natoli & Gritzner, 1988). Like history, geography may be viewed as holistic and comprehensive rather than as a specialized science. Geographers draw upon the other social sciences as they study distribution and spatial arrangements of phenomena (Broek, et al., 1980; Natoli, 1986). Specifically, the study of geography according to the Joint Committee of Geographic Education at the National Council Education and the Association of American Geographers (Natoli, 1984) introduces and develops the concept of scale; organizes quantitative and qualitative data about regions for analysis and generalization and hypothesis generation; requires gathering of evidence to identify problems and seek solutions; suggests alternatives for future human settlement; demonstrates through maps physical and human patterns on the earth's surface; develops powers of observation in field work; and provides a context for understanding regional interrelationships.

Geography, contend supporters, has social utility, but is also worthy of study in its own right. It is viewed as appropriate for infusion and integration into social studies, but deserving of separate course status in the middle and secondary grades (Natoli, 1984). Others contend that as part of the social studies, geographic knowledge and skills

assist citizens to form enlightened opinions and make informed decisions on a range of community, regional and global issues, gain perspectives about similarities and differences in ways people live and interest, see linkages among phenomena and issues from the local level to the global arena and to cast informed votes for government leaders relative to their ~~strands~~ stands complex on issues (Winston, 1986, p. 43). Geographers also point to career opportunities for those attracted to the geographic perspective as a purpose for including geography in the curriculum (Broek, et al, 1980; Natoli, 1988). With the development of *Guidelines for Geographic Education: Elementary and Secondary Schools* in which the Joint Committee on Geographic Education (Natoli, 1984) specified five fundamental themes as the core of geographic study - Location, Place, Relationships with Places, Movement and Regions - geography for schools has attained greater coherence that has enabled the discipline to renew a powerful claim for a place in the social studies curriculum.

Civics, government and political science have long been a part of social education in the United States. As Shaver and Knight (1986) have noted, however, the basic issue remains: "whether the curriculum for elementary and secondary school students is to reflect essentially scholarly interests of those in the field of political science and government or whether there is some broader, more encompassing civic purpose for K-12 social studies education..." (p. 71). Courses organized from these differing perspectives would be quite different.

Political scientists are less agreed than geographers on the organizing elements for a disciplinary perspective. The traditional institutional - structural approach leads to a focus on government, its historical development, and on political norms; the newer scientific strand focuses on political behavior and theory. The former gave rise to traditional civics and government courses; the latter to political behavior courses developed in the era of the "New Social Studies" two decades ago. More recently,

concern with public policy questions has shifted the field back to normative and value questions (Straayer, 1980; Gunnell, 1986). In addition to enabling citizens to understand government and political behavior, political scientists serve a utilitarian function by engaging in the prediction and analysis of probable political consequences of policies, strategies and actions (Straayer, 1980).

Social studies conceived as citizenship education as the overarching purpose may well draw on political science especially in relation to political theory, policy study and citizen action, but those who advocate this conception paint with a much broader brush. They typically offer multi-dimensional rationales that address such matters as the nature and function of schools, curriculum goals, the nature of knowledge, the nature of learning, definition of community, social realities and human diversity, the meaning, values and attributes of democracy and American core values, as they focus on decision making and participation in school and community (Shaver, 1977; Butts, 1980; Butts, 1988; Engle & Ochoa, 1988).

The value of economics may be couched in terms of preparation for personal functioning in society and for the full understanding of enduring issues and their immediate manifestation at all levels of society. Current discussions of economic literacy usually suggest a body of economic content to be learned. The purpose of learning this body of principles, concepts and information is to apply this knowledge to problems and in so doing to acquire the capacity to interpret and to understand analyses of others and the capacity to personally analyze new and unique problems in order to make reasoned decisions or judgments (Warmke, Muessig & Miller, 1980; Miller, 1988).

Historically there have been disagreements over both the purpose and approach to teaching economics in our schools. One issue revolved around the proper balance between personal economics with an emphasis on consumer and career education, and citizenship education with an emphasis on the analytical social science dimension.

Another issue has been whether to emphasize the conceptual/theoretical side, to focus on the practical or concrete situation, or blend the two. A third concern has been the place of controversial issues and decision-making (Armento, 1986).

These differences about economics in the school have been matched by the differences that have existed among scholars in the discipline itself on a wide range of matters. Economists have sharply disagreed over definitions of basic terms such as capital, savings and profit, on the validity of various economic models they employ in analysis and on the kinds of policies to be advocated whether Keynsian, supply side or other (VanHoose & Becker, 1986).

The other social sciences - anthropology, psychology and sociology - have played a lesser, although not unimportant role in K-12 social studies than have history, geography, political science and economics. Scholars in each of these disciplines have also differed in their views of the nature and scope of their field and its methodologies and thus have often pursued different questions using different approaches. Anthropology, for example, has both scientific and humanistic traditions. Anthropologists' concerns with human evolution and the systematic comparative analysis of sociocultural data of ethnic groups have contributed content to the K-12 social studies curriculum over the years, but discrete study of anthropology in schools is mostly a result of a half dozen or so curriculum projects that emerged in the 1960s. Anthropology can contribute key insights into understanding what it means to be human. Among them are (Pelto and Muessig, 1980; Bohannan, 1985; Dynneson, 1986; Owen, 1986):

- Human behavior is not mandated by inborn biological imperatives; culture and learning are preeminent factors in human action.
- The range of human cultural potential - linguistic, artistic, intellectual and other - appears to be shared widely among human societies and by members of both sexes.

- Human cultures differ because of their particular histories and settings, but have similarities in their form and structure; they are logical and coherent when understood from within.
- Each human being is a premise-guided creature, but often these premises are unconsciously held.

What anthropology can assist us in doing is come to a recognition and acceptance of these insights. Perhaps an even larger purpose was captured by the designers of *Man: A Course of Study* in the questions they raised: "What is human about human beings? How did they get that way? How can they be made more so? (Curriculum Development Associates, 1972).

Of the three disciplines, sociology is ~~more~~ most frequently found as a separate course in the curriculum at the secondary level. It also has had some presence in the primary grades although its inclusion in the early grades as exemplified in the expanding environments organization has been perceived by some to be so watered down and commonplace as to be useless (Ravitch, 1987). One of the key uses of sociology, as with the other social sciences, is to provide a different lens through which to view human behavior. In this case, the focus is on the interaction of groups and individuals. Of concern is how that interaction affects both the group and the individual. Sociologists identify patterns of behavior and roles individuals play within organizations. They look for relationships in these patterns within and across groups and organizations. They also search for relationships between aspects of personality and social behavior. They are also interested in how social patterns change over time. Sociology has also taken on an applied role as those trained in the discipline attempt to apply research-based propositions to a whole range of social problems. Sociology also informs us about a host of commonly used terms such as alienation, class, community, crowd, interaction, role,

social change, stratification, rural suburban and urban, knowledge of which comprises part of what is now popularly called cultural literacy (Kitchens, 1980; Eshleman, 1986; Wilson, 1987).

Psychology has also enriched our language with a host of commonly used concepts and terms. A popular elective in high school, psychology, has had virtually no direct role to play in the elementary school curriculum. A characteristic of psychology is its empirical orientation which demands that theory and conceptions be put to the test. Concrete testable hypothesis are a hallmark of the classical scientific tradition. The field of psychology, however, has been one characterized by divergent theoretical constructs ranging from behaviorism and psychoanalysis that view the organism as molded by forces it cannot readily control, if at all, to more dynamic and currently more popular theories of cognitive processing. Historically, the inclusion of psychology in the high school curriculum served a socializing function and had two goals: to assist students in understanding and improving their own personal development and to foster improved human relations. In the last two decades a third approach has been added - that of psychology as a social science focusing on such topics as conditioning and learning, personality, heredity, and intelligence (Schwartz, 1982; Bare, 1986; Wertheimer, et al., 1986).

In summary, the purposes and function of history and the social sciences in school programs are seen to provide alternative perspectives by which to view human societies in their physical and cultural contexts; to provide a means to come to know one's own cultural and historical traditions; to provide means to understand both common and unique patterns of human development and behavior both temporally and spatially; and to provide opportunity and means to engage in and refine critical thinking about issues and problems that have personal and social significance.

Content and Instruction

And what of content and instruction? The recent reform debate has been joined around the issue of the need for, and the nature of a common core of knowledge. E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (1987), William Bennett (1987, 1988), Lynne Cheney (1987), Diane Ravitch (1988), Paul Gagnon (1987), and The American Federation of Teachers (1987), among others have called for a common core of learning built around history and the humanities or history, geography and civic education. Gagnon put the issue this way: "The fate of the entire educational reform movement, from kindergarten through college, depends upon the willingness of educators to take up the intellectual challenge of deciding upon a common core of what is most worth learning in late-20th century American society, as well as where it most critically affects education for intelligent citizenship" (Gagnon, 1987, p. 19). He goes on to identify and refute the major arguments against a common core as he sees them - that our culture is too fragmented, and thus a common core would be oppressive and insulting; that a common core would be too elitist and unsuited to various groups of students; and that third the explosion of knowledge and rapid change in modern life would render any particular knowledge obsolete. He thus makes no apology but rather argues forcefully for his proposal to emphasize Western Civilization and the evolution of democracy as the core of world history. While agreeing that we need to study Western civilization to understand our past, Ernest Boyer warns that "we need to study non-Western cultures to understand our future" (Brandt, 1988, p. 6).

Hirsch (1987) and Cheney (1987) in arguing for cultural literacy find fault not only with curriculum fragmentation, but with the emphasis on process and skills development devoid of substantive core knowledge. Ravitch (1987) attacked the expanding environmental curriculum organization, content and textbooks. She proposed instead that the necessary background knowledge needed for cultural literacy found in

myths, legends, fairy tales, folktales, and stories about historical events and persons, heroes and villains formerly included in our schools should be reintroduced in place of what she labeled "tot sociology." Secretary of Education, William Bennett's proposals for elementary (1988) and secondary schools (1987) emphasize history, geography and civics throughout, beginning in the early grades with a strong focus on U.S. customs, traditions, national symbols, stories that stress desirable values and elements of character and civic responsibility.

The American Federation of Teachers urges a reordering of the social studies curriculum around a required core of history of the "United States and of democratic civilization, . . . American government and world geography, and of at least one non-Western society in depth" (1987, p. 20). Added to this core would be an introduction to the perspectives of the various social sciences and a realistic, unsentimental and comparative study of other notions their politics, ideology, economics and cultures.

The advocacy for identifying and teaching a body of core information, concepts and ideas has led other educators to warn of the dangers of "trivial pursuit" (Wiggins, 1987; Estes, Gutman & Harrison, 1988; Gross, 1988). They contend that students often fail to demonstrate knowledge of essential material despite having been exposed to it because they did not engage in thoughtful interaction with the material. Coverage does not necessarily equate with student learning. Assessments of student achievement in this country over the last two decades have consistently yielded disappointingly, even alarmingly poor results. The failure of our students to demonstrate fundamental knowledge of history has been found, most recently, in the National Assessment of Educational Progress test of 17-year-olds (Ravitch & Finn, 1987). The results, an average score of 54.5 percent on a 141 question history test, and the conclusion drawn by the report's authors - "a shameful level of performance" - is reminiscent of similar results on history tests and the subsequent reaction over four decades earlier during the

height of World War II (Hertzberg, 1981, pp. 69-70; Downey & Levstik, 1988). As reviewers of these testing efforts have warned, the assessments may "teli us more about the expectation of test developers than what history the test takers know or how they know it. . . or the quality of student's historical thinking" (Downey & Levstik, 1988, p. 337).

Instead of adding more to be covered in the curriculum, what we need to do according to the Maryland Thinking Collaborative is to move "from cultural literacy to cultural thoughtfulness" (Worsham, 1988, p. 20). The Coalition of Essential Schools (Wiggins, 1987) takes a similar position and operates under the principle earlier expressed by Theodore Sizer in *Horace's Compromise* (1984), that "Less is More." Committed to the view that both content and process are important, Grant Wiggins of the Coalition suggests organizing courses around essential questions. He offers this example for U.S. history: "Is the United States more or less of a 'pure' democracy now than at its founding?" (p. 12). Following Sizer's suggestions, the Coalition emphasizes "student-as-performer" and "teacher-as-coach." Students are expected to participate in "exhibitions" which through a research project or other device, they demonstrated "knowledge-in-use."

The importance of both process and content in the teaching of history and the social sciences has long been argued by thoughtful scholars and educators (Johnson, 1940; Hertzberg, 1981, 1988). The Teacher Assessment Project at Stanford University is finding additional evidence of this fusion in its series of "wisdom of practice" studies centering on teachers of excellence in history instruction. Project researchers have found that despite differences in teaching styles and classroom organization, ranging from traditional to the non-traditional, students seem to be affected in the same positive ways: students in classrooms of these teachers were engaged and grappling with ideas and they were excited and interested. The master teachers had visions of history and tried to

have students participate in those visions. Each had a rich storehouse of knowledge, and each found means to create what the researchers labeled as an "instructional representation" - a way of adjusting instruction to meet the needs, motivations and abilities of learners. What is clear is that the expert teachers have to blend knowledge about history, knowledge about teaching, and knowledge about learners in ways that suggests the complexity of teaching is not likely to be tapped by most of the models of teacher competency currently in use (Wineburg & Wilson, 1988). What is true of excellent high school history teaching is likely to be true as well of excellence in teaching social studies at all grade levels.

Unfortunately, as with the composite teacher, Horace, so vividly described by Sizer (1984) many classroom teachers feel compelled to make compromises and in fact teaching becomes something short of the excellence that might otherwise be achieved. Recent documentation of this phenomenon has been provided by Linda McNeil in *Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge* (1986). She describes defensive teaching strategies employed by teachers that limited their success in achieving the goals they espoused and belied the knowledge they possessed both of their field and of the learning process. What we need to remember in the midst of the current reform debate is that the essential elements for excellence in teaching and learning are teachers and students and their interactive engagements with the subject.

Meaningful research as a guide to practice in teaching social studies is rather limited by comparison to research in other academic fields, but nevertheless too extensive to be summarized in any detail here. Some generalizations are in order, however. Analyses of research tend to confirm that young children can learn and apply selected social science concepts and ideas earlier than had been assumed to be the case a few decades ago. Although abstract thinking, manipulation of data, understanding of sophisticated temporal and spatial relationships go beyond the capacities of younger

children, they are capable of more mature comprehension and thinking than often assumed when provided with appropriate background and learning experiences. Just as individuals go through stages of cognitive development they go through stages in moral development and in the development of attitudes toward a host of "others": authority figures, those from other subgroups, nations or cultures. Theories and supporting research on information processing and schema development suggest that learning of information in such a way that facilitates initial conceptual development with later elaboration to enrich and expand students' knowledge base is important to one's comprehension of the physical and social world. Teachers need to present students with information and ideas and then require them to apply these in new settings, including problem-solving situations. Thus the elementary grades and especially the middle grades seem to be an especially crucial time for social learning and for value and attitude formation. The conclusions drawn by Mathew Downey and Linda Levstik (1988) in their review of research on the teaching and learning of history are of particular interest in view of the recent attention given to the role of history in the curriculum. Among their conclusions they offered the following:

- Children know more about time and history than has been thought and are capable of more mature thinking when they possess adequate background information; earlier experience with history therefore seems warranted.
- A shallow cultural literacy approach to concept development should be avoided. What is needed is to focus on identifying subject matter that is both culturally significant and pedagogically engaging.
- Content, context and process are all important in teaching and learning history. Teacher knowledge of content is not sufficient for effective teaching. How one learns influences what is learned. Students need to be engaged, and engagement with history is both a pedogogical and a content concern.

- Narrative accounts such as historical fiction, biographies, journals, letters, etc., are frequently recommended as supplements to or replacements for textbooks. There is little research on this matter so those materials should be used cautiously. Students must be taught to be critical users of narrative materials as they do not come to this perspective spontaneously.
- Arrangements for K-6 social studies other than the expanding environments design should be explored and researched since the traditional design does not have a rationale grounded in research. (For example, Kieran Egan, 1978, 1979, 1983, advocates a four-stage model of historical thinking which suggests a curriculum design that differs significantly from the expanding environment pattern.)
- Good teaching cannot be engineered into existence; an engineering approach may in fact force out good teaching (See McNeil 1986, 1988, Part 3 on this point). To avoid having teachers reduced to the role of technicians we need to document excellence in teaching in all its varieties.

(For other examples of reviews of research and implications for classroom practice, see Branson and Torney-Purta, 1982; Hepburn, 1983; Atwood, 1986; Davis, et al, 1987; Hoge and Crump, 1988.)

Textbooks

One of the chief culprits cited by school critics in general, and social studies critics in particular, is the textbook (Fitzgerald, 1979; Davis, et al., 1986; Gagnon, 1987; Carroll, et al., 1987; Larkins, Hawkins & Gilmore, 1987; Ravitch, 1987; Bennett, 1988; Tyson-Bernstein, 1988a, b). Textbooks, it is charged, are too often *the course*. They provide the organizational basis for year to year and day to day instruction. Given their central role in curriculum organization and classroom instruction, their shortcomings are

magnified. And what are these shortcomings? The list is extensive indeed. They are criticized as flawed in content and manner of presentation. They are scored for covering too much so that they become little more then illustrated dictionaries; yet the same books may be faulted for the deletions of this or that topic (Butts, 1988, pp. 24-26). What is treated, reviewers contend, is presented poorly. They present no sense of structure, of what is really important and meaningful, and what less so. For example, history textbooks, it is charged, fail to provide context and to discuss the significance of events and issues, or to present the real life drama that unfolded in times past, and so are mere chronologies (Fitzgerald, 1979; Gagnon, 1987; Sewall, 1987). Geography, government and other social science textbooks are seen as little more than compendia of terms and facts that rival in their scope of coverage introductory, foreign language textbooks. Elementary grade social studies textbooks, especially for the primary grades, are condemned as worthless for their commonplace and vacuous content (Larkins, Hawkins, & Gilmore, 1987).

Then there is the matter of pedestrian or downright poor writing that makes these materials dull, boring, and incomprehensible despite, and perhaps because of publishers' efforts to enhance their "readability." Critics assert that textbooks are products of a system that is driven by what is kindly referred to as the profit motive, less kindly as greed, buffeted by the requirements of educational bureaucracies and demands of various pressure groups, but not taken seriously by academic scholars except as a source of income. On the one hand, authors and publishers are condemned as being too slow to incorporate recent scholarship, but too quick to respond to the latest fads and fashions washing over the schools.

This depressing picture comes largely from those other than classroom teachers, who themselves may hold a different perspective. There is some evidence that teachers do not subscribe to the view that the quality of textbooks is declining, or that textbooks

are flat, unimaginative and mindless collections of information and meaningless exercises (Metcalf, 1988; Rogers, 1988). In contrast, they apparently see textbooks as necessary references that provide an organizing framework for the curriculum, the best of which highlight important ideas, are attractive, have useful and appropriate student activities, are realistic and relevant to students' lives. In distinguishing between good and poor textbooks, teachers may complain as do other critics, that some are too much like catalogues of information, but they are especially concerned that textbooks be practical and easily comprehended by students. Given the fact that nearly half our states have some form of textbook adoption system, and included among them are large population states such as California, Florida and Texas, the mandating of textbook content and organization might well be effective in bringing about some change in the social studies curriculum. But state textbook mandates may not bring a change in the way social studies is taught for at least a couple of reasons. First, there is also some evidence to suggest that textbooks may not be as dominate in actual instruction as is thought to be the case. Student reading of textbooks, for example, may be rather limited, with information coming more from lecture and films than from textbooks (Downey & Levstik, 1988). Second, as a number of observers have noted, the dominant historical feature of social studies instruction has been the stability of traditional patterns of classroom practice (Shaver, Davis & Helburn, 1979; Morrissett, et al., 1982; Shaver & Knight, 1986).

Toward a New Social Studies?

Social studies is more than the sum total of the individual disciplines, but it is also less. The social studies has as a major goal the integration of content and perspectives for the purpose of citizenship education, a goal rarely directly espoused by the individual disciplines themselves. The perspectives, insights and the body of

knowledge generated by scholars in the disciplines and the methodologies they employ may indeed be used and even be vital in the task of civic education, but they are not sufficient. Whereas scholars within the disciplines have become increasingly specialized, citizens need a broad integrative education that utilizes multiple perspectives and analytical tools. The fragmentation brought on by ever narrower specialization has transformed what was once an avocation to that of a profession. This transformation of the academic disciplines has brought a questioning of the usefulness and significance of what sometimes appears to be rather esoteric research. This phenomenon led historian Theodore S. Hamerow (1988) to conclude that with regard to history "the result has been a serious diminution of the role of historical study in American life."

The current intellectual social and political ferment revolving around schooling and the role of the disciplines has had, however, a beneficial effect. Reformers are focusing on some key questions. The functions and purposes of schooling are being reexamined. The perennial question of "What knowledge is of most worth?" is once again being debated. There has been a realization once again that schools have been asked to do too much and that difficult choices will have to be made as to what schools should do and can do best. The debate about the composition and substance of a required core curriculum, may prove salutary in the long run, although the current reality seems one of chaos, especially in social studies. Historians create alliances with educators and call for a history-based curriculum, the most recent evidence of which can be found in the report of the Bradley Commission on History in Schools (Jackson, 1988). Geographers, too, create alliances and call for more infusion of geography in elementary grades and separate courses at the secondary level (Natoli, 1984). Economic educators with the network of centers throughout the nation continue to develop infusion and separate course materials based on the framework developed over a decade ago (Hansen, Bach, Calderwood & Saunders, 1977).

And the list of special interest groups that push for inclusion in the social studies continues to grow. That all that is urged upon us to include in the social studies cannot be included has been made painfully clear to students if not adult critics. While the risk of ever more inclusion of content in the curriculum poses the risk of greater incoherence, there is also risk at the other end of the pendulum swing - a single mandated curriculum imposed on schools and reinforced through a variety of means. The factory-based competency model of education with its dependence on narrowly conceived testing programs may short-circuit meaningful change. For example, judging school quality and tying teacher career ladder advancement to student test performance will not necessarily achieve desired ends such as enhancement of our national economic competitiveness or the establishment of benchmarks of educational excellence. State legislatures and state departments of education could lock in place, through law or mandate, currently advocated reform curriculum structures and instructional practices that subsequent experience and research may demonstrate fall short of expectations at the school and classroom level.

A significant missing dimension in the current reform movement has been identified by Ernest Boyer, President of Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and co-chair of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools when he recently observed that what is now needed is consideration of "how various disciplines can serve larger, more integrative ends" (Brandt, 1988, p. 5). He cited social studies along with science as the two high school subjects most in need of revision, but strongly rejected the view that substituting history and geography was the answer. Instead, he called for a fresh integrative look at something on the order of *Man, A Course of Study* with its powerful cross-cultural approach.

Is such a new conception on the horizon? I am uncertain, but efforts currently underway offer some possibilities. One intriguing effort is the American Association for

the Advancement of Science's Project 2061 which will result in the release early next year of the first phase report, *Science for All Americans*. The report will attempt to define the dimensions of scientific literacy encompassing physical, biological and social science, mathematics and technology that adult citizens of the 21st century should know. Subsequent efforts and reports will consider curriculum and instruction. Whether this project will result in a truly integrative curriculum is unclear, but it merits our consideration.

Another promising integrative effort is the CIVITAS project, a joint project of the Council for the Advancement of Citizenship, of which NCSS is a member, and the Center for Civic Education with funding from the PEW Charitable Trusts. The goal of the project is to develop a framework which identifies the goals, content, process, and experiences considered to be vital in developing effective citizenship education programs. The purpose of the framework is to serve as a guide and resource for state departments of education and school districts in developing their own specific programs.

The National Commission on Social Studies will issue a report on curriculum within the year. We in NCSS will continue our work on scope and sequence models in response to the House of Delegates 1987 resolution to adopt three alternative models from among those developed in 1983 (Jarolimek) and 1986 (Bragaw) and will publish those models within the year.

None of this, will of course, end debate on the purpose, substance and organization of the social studies curriculum. Perhaps as Fred Newmann (1988) suggests, the choice about specific curriculum content will ultimately come down to "a matter of taste, and consensus will be determined. . . by horse trading between parties to assure a place for their favorite people, works or historical events" (p. 436). Nevertheless, we must seek to establish those broad parameters that permit the bargaining to take place. If we do not achieve at least broad agreement on the

parameters while we have the opportunity, then we could well move toward greater divisiveness and fragmentation among the disciplines on which the social studies rest, or alternatively, we could move toward politically mandated programs that once established may prove resistant to modification and change.

For me, these broad criteria should address at least the following:

1. What meaning do we wish students to draw from their study of social studies? How is that meaning to be obtained? Teachers may provide meaning by what they say and do. Students, in the final analysis, however, must accept the meaning they receive as plausible and must internalize that sense of meaning or they must construct their own meaning from their instructional experiences in the larger context of all other in-school and out-of-school experiences.
2. How can opportunities for student learning and practice of principles of democratic citizenship be systematically incorporated into school and community activities so that these experiences provide continuity rather than discontinuity between life in classrooms and life outside? What is the appropriate sequence of such experiences?
3. What is the appropriate blend of history, the social sciences, and other related disciplines as sources of descriptive information, and as analytical, meaning-making perspectives conducive to inquiry, imagination and reflection? In history, for example, I have in mind the conception of history as story vs. history as reflected in historical Carl Becker's words "Everyman his own historian" (Becker, 1935).

4. Which persistent historical issues and which emerging issues of human experience do we need to imbed in the social studies curriculum for in-depth and perhaps repeated study? At what levels and in what form can these issues best be addressed given student abilities, interests and development patterns and the always persistent question of educational opportunity - costs?
5. Where, how and for what purpose should we integrate and infuse content, perspectives and methodologies from various disciplines and where is the social studies most appropriately organized around a single discipline?

The role of the disciplines remains a divisive issue in the field. By and large the social studies have remained a federation of separate subjects. Attempts at fusion or synthesis have had some success at the elementary school level, less so at the secondary level, primarily with Civics and Problems of Democracy courses, both of which have declined as offerings or disappeared from school curricula entirely. Recent advocacy by a group of like-minded academicians, educators and others to abandon the concept of social studies is but a recent manifestation of the issue that has remained unsettled since social studies became a curriculum entity. But it need not remain that way. Out of the current ferment can come the realization that social studies as an organizer of insights, propositions, content and methodologies from history, the social sciences and other scholarly fields, is not only useful, but necessary for the school to fill its role in the civic education of our youth. Synthesis and integration are what we need. The task before us is to establish the parameters and create the basis for a new social studies that preserves the best of past and current practice, but also addresses emerging realities and 21st century prospects and needs for the social education of citizens in our ever-changing and globally-linked society.

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